

Opening Statement
Chairman John Fleming
House Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee Legislative Hearing
on H.R. 3070 (Zeldin) and H.R. 4245 (Pingree)
February 2, 2016

The Subcommittee meets today to consider two bills that promote commercial and recreational fishing access and help provide more seafood availability for domestic and international seafood consumers. Both of these bills make common sense adjustments to federal law to correct regulatory nightmares and inconsistencies. It is my hope that the agencies before us today are willing to work with us on solutions.

H.R. 3070, introduced by our colleague Lee Zeldin (*Zel-den*) from New York, corrects a unique navigational issue in Block Island Sound, off the coasts of Long Island and Rhode Island. As we will hear today, this small strip of federally controlled waters poses regulatory confusion for fishermen who are trying to abide by both state and federal fisheries laws but are challenged by navigational boundaries that are not visually apparent around Block Island. Mr. Zeldin's legislation, which has bipartisan beginnings since a prior bill was introduced by his predecessor, makes a small adjustment to the federal / state water boundaries to resolve this fisheries management issue.

The second bill we will consider today is H.R. 4245, introduced by our Maine colleagues Chellie Pingree (*Pin-gree*) and Bruce Poliquin (*Paul-a-quin*). This bipartisan bill exempts two species from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's seafood licensing requirements – a correction that has been supported by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

This is a classic case of where the left arm of the federal government is acting against the wishes of the right arm. This inconsistency has nothing to do with making seafood safer but it has a lot to do with feathering an agency's nest with import and export fees that are passed on to the consumer or result in delayed or even spoiled shipments.

It is my hope that today we can work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a path forward to correct this inconsistency with these species, as well as squid and octopus. This, too, is a bipartisan problem that deserves a solution.

We will hear more about these bills from the experts we have before us today. I want to welcome our non-committee colleagues and the witnesses for being here. I look forward to hearing from all of you today and learning more about these important issues.